

DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Assessing an After-School Reading Activity

Marshall Elementary School, California • January 2010

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day
Practice: Evaluate Program

Highlights

- The principal, the lead teacher, and the director of the after-school program at Marshall Elementary look at student data to identify students who need extra support.
- Targeted reading support is offered to individual English language learners students based on their performance on assessments in Spanish and English.
- Focusing services on students who are at the cusp of performing at the basic or proficient level has resulted in large gains for the students in the program.

About the Site

Marshall Elementary School
San Francisco, CA

Demographics

78% Hispanic
7% White
3% Black

2% Asian

90% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

65% English Language Learners

Marshall Elementary School's after-school program aims to promote students' academic skills and enrichment experiences by using the following strategies:

- A full-time lead teacher aligns planned program activities with the regular school day.
- After-school staff and a parent coordinator maintain regular communication with parents.
- The after-school program uses reading curricula aimed at helping English language learners.
- The after-school program director monitors students' progress and works to tailor the program to their needs.
- After-school teachers receive ongoing coaching and professional development.

Full Transcript

My name is Rebecca Carrillo, and I am the director of Mission Graduates Tutoring Center, and we are located at Marshall Elementary, in San Francisco, California.

As part of our collaboration with the school day and the school administration, we get together at the beginning of every year and we have a leadership team meeting where we look over the data from the past year that we have compiled thus far, and we identify the students that are most in need of receiving special services during the after-school program. So the people that meet are the principal, the lead teacher who is a teacher from the school day that also assists with professional development and training and provides service to the after-school, and I.

So what we were looking at specifically each year is the students that are performing relatively well in Spanish and really need to transfer those skills into English. If you are scoring at below basic or basic in your CST, which is your English test, but you are scoring higher in your SLT test, which is a Spanish test, then you would be identified as somebody that could be transferring those skills and moved up to proficient or advanced in the CST, which is what we are really aiming for. And we see most of those students in second or third grade really being at that borderline.

Student reading aloud: . . . built to carry ten times their weight.

Carrillo: So when we sit down together at the leadership team meeting at the beginning of the year, we identify about six kids in each class based on their standardized test scores from the previous year. We immediately test them, and our reading intervention specialist, who is a daytime school teacher, he is the one that administers these assessments. So he comes and he assesses the kids, and that gives him an idea where he needs to start with each group. Each group is going to be a little bit different. The third-grade

group needs to work a lot more on ELL [English language learner] strategies than the fifth-grade group does, and that's what he gleans from these leveled readings.

Mid-year, at the end of January, at the end of the first semester, he administers the assessment again and monitors to see if kids have moved up like they should. If they are staying where they are, maybe we need to change our strategy, switch up what we were doing. And then at the end of the year, he conducts the last leveled reading assessment. And then we compile all of that at the end of the year and analyze it to see what direction we want to move in for the next year.

One of the things that we are asked a lot by different directors of other sites, different potential funders, is if the services that we are providing in our program actually work. Speaking specifically to the students that receive special services, a really good example of how we have tailored our program to this reflection is last year we were using these focus groups with students that were the absolute lowest-performing in both Spanish and English. We looked at the data from last year; we analyzed it and realized these are not the services that those students need. We are really missing our target group here. And so we adjusted the students that were going to be served this year in these special focus groups to be the students that were performing higher in Spanish but still lacking those skills in English.

San Francisco Unified School District has adopted a data system that is extremely helpful in gleaning information for our students and helping us decide where we are going to focus our services in the years to come. What we do with that program is we create groups. I have a group that is created of just the students that are in my after-school program, and I can track their standardized testing for the past three years, which is really helpful in determining the success that we have had in Spanish, the success we have had in English. And I can also create subgroups. So I can create a subgroup of students that are English language learners and look specifically at them and the success that they have had or where it is they are still struggling. I can look specifically at grades also, which is really helpful when dealing with grade-specific issues.

The most surprising thing that I have recently seen was at an Excel meeting that I went to. It was a districtwide meeting, and I got to compare the Marshall Elementary after-school program's progress in the past year to the rest of the San Francisco Unified School District after-school programs. And it was really refreshing to see that the area that we were focusing on, which are those students that are at below basic but ready to move up to basic and proficient, which are the ones we have been really focusing our services on—their percentage of positive change, their progress, was just light years ahead of where the other after-school programs was. And I hadn't seen that laid out for me on paper before, and it was so refreshing and so exciting to see because it means that we are focusing our efforts in the right place.